multi-lateral cooperation to check and counter terrorism and several institutional mechanisms have been developed towards this end. These, *inter-alia*, include Home Secretary Level Talks with Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan, Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on Counter Terrorism with 25 countries and 2 regional groups *viz.* European Union (EU) and The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economical Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) in criminal matters with 22 countries, and Extradition Treaties with 26 countries.

Further, India is an active member of the Global Coalition against terrorism and it is a signatory to all UN Security Council Resolutions on counter terrorism and is an active partner in all UN measures to combat the menace of Global Terrorism.

Telephone tapping

*114. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that selective category of persons are being subjected to telephone tapping across the country;

(b) if so, even the politicians who are mainly senior functionaries of the opposition party are being subjected to telephone tapping;

(c) if so, the reasons for this type of phone tapping exercises undertaken across the country; and

(d) the basis on which the people are selected for this type of telephone tapping?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (d) Under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the rules made thereunder, the Union Home Secretary in the Government of India and the Secretary, in-charge of Home Department in the case of State Governments can allow interception of messages in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order and for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence. There is a strict legal and administrative regime to ensure that this power is exercised only as per the said provision.

Hike in cement prices

*115. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the supply of cement in the country has been affected and its prices have gone up recently;

(b) if so, the increase in the prices of cement registered during the last one year, month-wise, and the impact thereof on the construction industry;

(c) whether the Builders Association of India has protested by announcing stoppage of construction activity in the country against unfair business practices of cement manufactures; and

(d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken by Government against cement manufacturers and the steps taken by Government to bring down the prices of cement?